AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method comprising:

rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate an action;

making a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements active; and

making a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements active in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein said second portion is selected ~~selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks~~ according to said logical order, and wherein said first and second portions of active elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order so that said active elements are presented to said user to guide said user through said tasks in said logical order.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein elements in said second portion are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first portion.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 5 wherein said microcontroller is designed according to a programmable single-chip architecture.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises first icons organized in a first row and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises second icons organized in a second row adjacent to said first row, wherein said first icons and said second icons are arranged to indicate a hierarchy of said tasks within said logical order.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein a first element for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:

a bus;

a display device coupled to said bus;

a memory unit coupled to said bus; and

a processor coupled to said bus, said processor for executing a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method comprising:

rendering on said display device a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate an action;

making a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements active; and

making a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements active in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein said second portion is selected ~~selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks~~ according to said logical order, and wherein said first and second portions of active elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order so that said active elements are presented to said user to guide said user through said tasks in said logical order.

12. (Original) The computer system of Claim 11 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

13. (Original) The computer system of Claim 11 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

14. (Original) The computer system of Claim 11 wherein elements in said second portion are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first portion.

15. (Original) The computer system of Claim 11 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

16. (Previously Presented) The computer system of Claim 15 wherein said microcontroller is designed according to a programmable single-chip architecture.

17. (Previously Presented) The computer system of Claim 11 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises first icons organized in a first row and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises second icons organized in a second row adjacent to said first row, wherein said first icons and said second icons are arranged to indicate a hierarchy of said tasks within said logical order.

18. (Canceled).

19. (Original) The computer system of Claim 11 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

20. (Original) The computer system of Claim 11 wherein a first element for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

21. (Currently Amended) A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method comprising:

rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate an action;

making a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements active; and

making a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements active in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein said second portion is selected ~~selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks~~ according to said logical order, and wherein said first and second portions of active elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order so that said active elements are presented to said user to guide said user through said tasks in said logical order.

22. (Original) The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

23. (Original) The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

24. (Original) The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein elements in said second portion are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first portion.

25. (Original) The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

26. (Previously Presented) The computer-usable medium of Claim 25 wherein said microcontroller is designed according to a programmable single-chip architecture.

27. (Previously Presented) The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises first icons organized in a first row and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises second icons organized in a second row adjacent to said first row, wherein said first icons and said second icons are arranged to indicate a hierarchy of said tasks within said logical order.

28. (Canceled).

29. (Original) The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

30. (Original) The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein a first element for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

31. (Currently Amended) A graphical user interface (GUI) for helping a user perform tasks in software, said GUI comprising:

a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate an action;

wherein a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements is active; and

wherein a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements is made active in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a

logical order and wherein said second portion is selected ~~selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks~~ according to said logical order, and wherein said first and second portions of active elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order so that said active elements are presented to said user to guide said user through said tasks in said logical order.

32. (Original) The GUI of Claim 31 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

33. (Original) The GUI of Claim 31 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

34. (Previously Presented) The GUI of Claim 31 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller according to a programmable single-chip architecture.

35. (Previously Presented) The GUI of Claim 31 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises first icons organized in a first row and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises second icons organized in a second row adjacent to said first row, wherein said first icons and said second icons are arranged to indicate a hierarchy of said tasks within said logical order.

36. (Canceled).

37. (Original) The GUI of Claim 31 further comprising windows selectively displayed in response to user selection of an element.

38. (New) The GUI of Claim 31 wherein at least two graphic elements of said first portion of graphic elements are adjacent to each other, a first one of said two graphic elements corresponding to a first task and a second one of said two graphic elements corresponding to a second task, said first task preceding said second task according to said logical order.